

tell her about the new cases in her ward, and that her staff nurse helps her over many a difficult place, is a dull person in the extreme in the nurses' sitting room. On the contrary, the nurse who can describe in graphic terms how on every and all occasions, for no reason whatsoever, the matron "has her knife into her," how the ward sister knows nothing of the cases, and is nonplussed by questions put to her by the said probationer, while the staff nurse is a tyrant, for whom no tortures are too bad, is an amusing comrade, more especially if she can describe these details in racy language. Of such an improvisatrice, strict truthfulness is by no means required. If she can keep the sitting room amused she may "embroider" with impunity. This, we believe, is the origin of much of the grumbling which takes place. The round of hospital work is monotonous, and news often scanty; the grumbler is a necessity and a welcome diversion. But, new probationers, take warning! Grumbling is a practice which is more easily acquired than got rid of. Therefore, pause before you fall into the prevailing habit. Don't take all your ideas secondhand, but before you make up your mind that the matron is your natural enemy and you yourself a sort of Esau, whom every man's hand is against, just bring an unprejudiced mind to bear upon the question, and dare to form an independent conclusion. Lastly, in the hope that our advice may in exceptional cases be taken to heart, we say, don't embroider for the sake of effect.

#### SHOP.

"I HAVEN'T any time for steady reading in hospital" says a nurse in an airy manner, as if this statement dispenses her of all obligations to keep her mind cultured, and herself informed upon subjects which are matters of common knowledge and interest. Haven't you? How about the two hours off duty every day? Do you spend all that out of doors, or mending your clothes. (Do you ever mend your clothes at all, by the way? Certainly not, what's the use when that horrid laundry makes fresh tears every week.) Then, again, how about all the odd hours on night duty when the patients are asleep, and all the necessary work is done? When did you find time, may we ask, to read *Tit Bits*, and to inform yourself as to the latest fashions? Where there is a will there is a way, and we are afraid it is not so much want of time, as

want of will, that is at the bottom of much of the difficulty in the way of the non-reading nurse. If only nurses would recognize the necessity which exists for their being well informed upon the topics of the day they would find time to read at least a daily paper, and perhaps a "steady" book into the bargain. Then we should hear less often than at present the wail from a long suffering public that "the nurse did her work very well, oh, very well, and I am grateful to her, but really I hope I shan't want a trained nurse again, for when I was getting better she seemed to be able to talk about nothing but cases she has nursed, and it made me quite sick to listen to her stories." Nurses will do well to realize that details which seem commonplace enough to them, are ghastly to the ordinary patient.

#### PAUPER NURSING.

AT a recent meeting of the Leicester Board of Guardians Miss Ellis commented upon the need of removing epileptics and imbeciles from union infirmaries. The necessity for this measure will, we think, be fully endorsed by all who have had experience of this class of patient. Miss Ellis also laid stress upon the need for the utter abolition of pauper nursing, and said that, setting aside the women and girls of bad character, the vast proportion of the inmates of workhouses were sick, infirm, and aged, or mentally incapable. This entailed nursing duties being performed by the mentally afflicted if pauper help were employed. In support of this theory Miss Ellis quoted the following instances cited by Miss Chapman, Guardian of the Tisbury Union, at the recent Conference of Poor Law Guardians, of pauper nursing in unions so lately as the present year. "Children's ward; nurse, charge of children, assisted by classed imbecile, dumb," and "Women's sick ward; widow aged seventy, certified attendant, assisted by classed imbecile." It is heart-rending for anyone possessed of even a modicum of imagination to picture the suffering of the sick under such conditions. The Leicester Guardians would appear to be exceptionally progressive, and Miss Chapman remarked that it might be said these things hardly concerned them, but she held that if there were only two or three unions where this state of things prevailed, it behoved all guardians to endeavour to alter it. This is a public spirited conclusion which must commend itself to all.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)